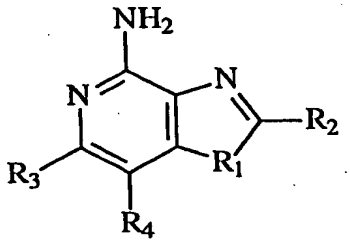
WE CLAIM:

1. A compound of the formula I:



(I)

wherein:

R_1 is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur and selenium;

R_2 is selected from the group consisting of

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkyl-OH;

-haloalkyl;

-alkenyl;

-alkyl-X-alkyl;

-alkyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkyl-$N(R_5)_2$;

-alkyl-N_3;

-alkyl-O-C(O)-$N(R_5)_2$;

-heterocyclyl;

-alkyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-alkenyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-aryl;

-alkyl-X-aryl;

-alkenyl-X-aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-alkyl-X-heteroaryl; and

-alkenyl-X-heteroaryl;

$\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ are each independently:

-hydrogen;

-X-alkyl;

-halo;

-haloalkyl;

$-N(R_5)_2$;

or when taken together, $\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ form a fused aromatic, heteroaromatic, cycloalkyl or heterocyclic ring;

X is selected from the group consisting of –O–, –S–, $-NR_5-$, –C(O)–, –C(O)O–, –OC(O)–, and a bond; and

each $\mathbf{R_5}$ is independently H or $C_{1\text{-}8}$alkyl;

with the proviso that when R_1 is sulfur, R_3 is not $-NH_2$; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_1 is oxygen or sulfur.

3. A compound according to claim 1, wherein R_3 and R_4 are taken together to form a substituted or unsubstituted benzene ring.

4. A compound according to claim 2 wherein R_3 and R_4 are taken together to form a substituted or unsubstituted benzene ring.

5. A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are taken together to form a substituted or unsubstituted pyridine ring.

6. A compound according to claim 2 wherein R_3 and R_4 are taken together to form a substituted or unsubstituted pyridine ring.

7. A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_2 is C_{1-4} alkyl.

8. A compound according to claim 2 wherein R_2 is C_{1-4} alkyl.

9. A compound according to claim 1 wherein R_1 is sulfur.

10. A compound according to claim 9 wherein R_3 and R_4 are taken together to form a substituted or unsubstituted benzene ring.

11. A compound according to claim 10 wherein R_2 is C_{1-4} alkyl.

12. A compound according to claim 10 wherein R_2 is *n*-propyl.

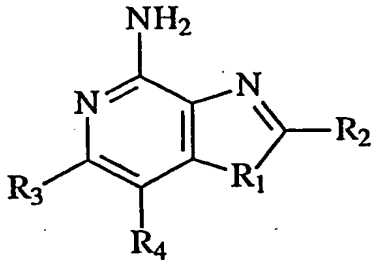
13. 2-*n*-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

14. A compound selected from the group consisting of:
2-methylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-ethylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-propylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-pentylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-butylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(1-methylethyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(2-phenyl-1-ethenyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(2-phenyl-1-ethyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(4-aminothiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-2-yl)-1,1-dimethylethyl carbamate;
2-(ethoxymethyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;

2-(methoxymethyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(2-methylpropyl)thiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-benzylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
8-methyl-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
(4-aminothiazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-2-yl)methanol;
2-methyloxazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-ethyloxazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-butyloxazolo[4,5-c]quinolin-4-amine;
2-propylthiazolo [4,5-c] quinolin-4,8-diamine;
2-propyloxazolo [4,5-c] quinolin-4-amine;
8-bromo-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
7-methyl-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
2-butyl-7-methyloxazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
7-methyl-2-propyloxazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
7-fluoro-2-propyloxazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
7-fluoro-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
2-propyl-7-(trifluoromethyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(4-morpholino)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
2-(1-pyrrolidino)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
2-butylthiazolo[4,5-*c*][1,5]naphthyridin-4-amine;
2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*][1,5]naphthyridin-4-amine;
7-chloro-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;
7-methoxy-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-4-amine;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

15. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of Formula I(a):



I(a)

wherein:

R_1 is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur and selenium;

R_2 is selected from the group consisting of

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkyl-OH;

-haloalkyl;

-alkenyl;

-alkyl-X-alkyl;

-alkyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkyl-$N(R_5)_2$;

-alkyl-N_3;

-alkyl-O-C(O)-$N(R_5)_2$;

-heterocyclyl;

-alkyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-alkenyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-aryl;

-alkyl-X-aryl;

-alkenyl-X-aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-alkyl-X-heteroaryl; and

-alkenyl-X-heteroaryl;

R_3 and R_4 are each independently:

-hydrogen;

-X-alkyl;

-halo;

-haloalkyl;

$-N(R_5)_2$;

or when taken together, R_3 and R_4 form a fused aromatic, heteroaromatic, cycloalkyl or heterocyclic ring;

X is selected from the group consisting of –O–, –S–, $-NR_5-$, –C(O)–, –C(O)O–, –OC(O)–, and a bond; and

each R_5 is independently H or C_{1-8}alkyl;or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

16. A method of inducing cytokine biosynthesis in a mammal comprising administering a composition of claim 15 to the mammal.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the cytokine comprises IFN-α.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the cytokine comprises TNF-α.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein the composition is administered topically.

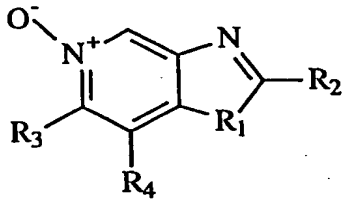
20. A method of treating a viral disease in a mammal comprising administering a composition of claim 15 to the mammal.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the composition is administered topically.

22. A method of treating a neoplastic disease in a mammal comprising administering a composition of claim 15 to the mammal.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the composition is administered topically.

24. A compound of the formula II:



(II)

wherein

R_1 is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur and selenium;

R_2 is selected from the group consisting of

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkyl-OH;

-haloalkyl;

-alkenyl;

-alkyl-X-alkyl;

-alkyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkyl;

-alkenyl-X-alkenyl;

-alkyl-$N(R_5)_2$;

-alkyl-N_3;

-alkyl-O-C(O)-$N(R_5)_2$;

-heterocyclyl;

-alkyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-alkenyl-X-heterocyclyl;

-aryl;

-alkyl-X-aryl;

-alkenyl-X-aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-alkyl-X-heteroaryl;

-alkenyl-X-heteroaryl;

-SO_2CH_3; and

-CH_2-O-C(O)-CH_3;

$\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ are each independently:

-hydrogen;

-X-alkyl;

-halo;

-haloalkyl;

-$N(R_5)_2$;

or when taken together, $\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ form a fused aromatic, heteroaromatic, cycloalkyl or heterocyclic ring;

X is selected from the group consisting of –O–, –S–, –NR_5–, –C(O)–, –C(O)O–, and a bond; and

each $\mathbf{R_5}$ is independently H or C_{1-8}alkyl.

25. A compound selected from the group consisting of:

2-methylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-ethylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-pentylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-butylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-(1-methyethyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-(2-phenyl-1-ethenyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-phenylethylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-methyl-1-thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinolin-2-yl-2-propanol-5N-oxide;

2-(ethoxymethyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-(methoxymethyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-(2-methylpropyl)thiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

2-benzylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide;

8-methyl-2-propylthiazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide; and

2-butyloxazolo[4,5-*c*]quinoline-5N-oxide.